

## LITURGICAL SECTION

### GRADUALE SIMPLEX

● H. J. Graf, S.V.D.

The year 1967 was a very fruitful and successful one for the Concilium for the implementation of the Constitution on the liturgy. One of the many documents published during this year was the "Graduale simplex" which came out early in October. The decree wherewith the Congregation of Rites approved this document bears the date of September 3, 1967, the feast of St. Pius X, the great promoter of Gregorian chant.

The attractively printed book of 431 pages of texts and melodies and an eleven page introduction can now fulfill its aim to enable all communities, especially small parishes, to celebrate Mass in the more noble form of the sung and solemn Mass, because "liturgical action is given a more noble form when sacred rites are solemnized in song, with the assistance of sacred ministers and the active participation of the people" (Const. on the lit., art. 113). Its simple, but usually appealing melodies can really open Gregorian chant to a greater public.

#### **I. Simplification**

Despite all efforts of pastors and teachers who worked perseveringly in a number of countries to teach the people Gregorian chant, as the Popes from St. Pius X to Pius XII had urged them, all had to admit that the results were discouraging. The Roman liturgical books of Gregorian chant contain usually rather complicated, long drawn out, melismatic melodies which can be sung only by well-trained scholas or relatively small and educated communities in seminaries and religious houses of studies.

---

Graduale Simplex in usum minorum Ecclesiarum. Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1967. XI-431 pp.

Even before the Council started it was acknowledged among scholars that we needed simpler texts and melodies. Thus the preparatory commission for the schema of the liturgy proposed the compilation of easier schemata for the Proper of the Mass. They should be adaptable to different situations and circumstances. Without difficulties, therefore, the present article 117 of the Constitution on the liturgy was approved: "It is desirable also that an edition be brought out containing simpler chants, for use in smaller churches".

How has this simplification been achieved? A solution in the style of the "editio Medicea", an adaptation of the Gregorian melodies to the humanistic ideas of the 16th and 17th centuries, was out of the question. It would have resulted in a mutilated Gregorian chant, against which one of the Council Fathers had warned. The scholars who prepared the new book of Gregorian chant were equally convinced that the creative period of Gregorian chant was irrevocably gone. New compositions of Gregorian chant which have been introduced into a number of feasts during the last decennia have been severely criticized by Church musicians themselves; they said that these melodies would better be called "modern" than Gregorian. This did not make it advisable to compose new Gregorian melodies. The only way out of the dilemma for the study group entrusted with the preparation of the Graduale simplex was to search for appropriate texts and melodies in the venerable tradition of Gregorian chant. One of the main sources for both texts and melodies was the Divine Office of the Roman Rite which contains many simple and appealing antiphons. But what they found there was not sufficient for the purposes of the Graduale simplex. Therefore, the ancient liturgical sources of the Latin West had to be investigated, particularly those of the Ambrosian and Spanish tradition. The patient and painstaking research of the Benedictines, especially of Solesmes, as published in the monumental collection "Paléographie musicale" and other works, offered valuable material.

The Graduale simplex does not only offer new melodies but also new texts for the Roman Mass. Texts, not formerly found in the Roman Missal entered the liturgy: a true enrichment of the Mass liturgy which offers greater variety.

## II. The Content

As Graduale the new book contains the Introits, interlectionary chants, Offertories and Communions of the Mass. We find there usually short and simple antiphons for a psalm or a greater part of a psalm (about 8 to 10 verses). The antiphon has to be repeated after each verse. According to the generally admitted principle of freedom of choice, not all verses of the psalm must be sung; they may be freely chosen. But if some are omitted, those selected should make sense.

In order to reduce the number of Mass formularies in the Graduale simplex, Commune Masses were introduced also into the temporal cycle of the ecclesiastical year. This was not an absolute innovation. The Roman Missal contained already Commune Masses for feasts of Saints. There existed also a kind of Commune Masses for the Sundays after Epiphany and for the 23rd and subsequent Sundays after Pentecost: on these Sundays the processional and infra-lectionary chants were always the same. The liturgy of Milan had made use of this principle on a much larger scale than Rome.

Now, according to the Graduale simplex, only the presidential prayers (collect, prayer over the gifts and postcommunion) and the lessons of the Sundays throughout the year remain obligatory. When the Sunday Masses are repeated during the week and one has the privilege to use one of the weekday lectionaries, even the lessons change from day to day. If the Graduale simplex contains several schemata for a certain time of the ecclesiastical year (Lent, Eastertide, time after Pentecost) one may freely choose the chants from one or the other schema for the respective part of the church year, for instance, the Introit from the first, the Offertory from the second schema, etc. The same holds true for the Commune of Saints.

For the time after Pentecost the Graduale simplex contains six of these schemata; for Advent, Lent and Eastertide we find two each. More important liturgical days as Christmas, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday and shorter periods of the seasonal cycle received only one schema each. Certain feasts of Our Lord and Our Lady have Masses of their own in the Graduale simplex, as also the feasts of the Holy Family, St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist, Sts. Peter and Paul, St. Michael and All

Saints, i.e., feasts which eventually replace the Sunday Mass of the Roman Missal.

Commune Masses in the sense as we found them up to now in the Missal have been arranged for feasts of Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, holy virgins and women (a single schema for both), dedication of a church and for feasts of Our Lady. Usually, these Commune Masses contain two sets of antiphons for the Introit, Offertory and Communion and the usual chants between the lessons. One may freely choose from among the texts offered.

We find further ten schemata for more frequently needed votive Masses in the Graduale simplex: a votive Mass of the Holy Spirit, of the anniversary of the Pope and the Bishop, of the nuptial Mass, for religious profession, for ecclesiastical and religious vocations, for Church unity, for peace, and finally for any kind of need.

The Commune Mass for the dead has even three sets of antiphons. The Alleluja entered the interlectionary chants also of these Masses, obviously in order "to evidence more clearly the paschal character of Christian death" (Const. on the lit., art. 81).

It seems to be advisable to present here one of the schemata so that the reader may have an idea how the Graduale simplex has been arranged, though, for obvious reasons, musical notation cannot be presented.

*Fifth Schema for the Time after Pentecost*

*Introitus Antiphon*

Give peace, O Lord, in our days, since there is no other who fights for us, except you, our God.

Ps. 121,1 I was glad when they said to me: "Let us go to the House of the Lord".

Ant. Give peace...

(There follow all verses of the psalm.)

Glory be to the Father... As it was in the beginning...

Ant. Give peace...

*Responsorial Psalm (Ps 42)*

V. Hope in God: for I shall again praise Him. R. He is my help and my God (v. 5b).

V. Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people; from deceitful and unjust men deliver me (v. 1).

R. You are my help and my God.

(There follow the verses 2, 3, 4, 5a)

*Alleluja (Ps 9)*

Alleluja, alleluja, alleluja.

(All repeat this threefold Alleluja.)

V. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will tell of all Thy wonderful deeds (v.2).

All: Alleluja, alleluja, alleluja.

V. And those who know Thy name, put their trust in Thee; for Thou, O Lord, hast not forsaken those who seek Thee (v. 11).

All: Alleluja, alleluja, alleluja.

Or: *Alleluja Psalm (Ps 9)*

V. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will tell of all Thy wonderful deeds (v. 2).

R. Alleluja, alleluja.

(There follow the verses 3, 8b9a, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16a, 19, Ps 9B, 17).

*Offertory Antiphon*

Do good, O Lord, to those who are good.

Ps. 124,1 Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

Ant. Do good...

(There follow verses 2, 3, 5)

*Communion Antiphon*

Help me, O Lord, and I find salvation.

Ps. 118,1 Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

Ant. Help me, O Lord...

(There follow the verses 2, 12, 17, 25, 27, 35, 36, 48, 49.)

Glory be to the Father... As it was...

Ant. Help me, O Lord...

### III. The different Elements of the Graduale simplex

#### 1. *Introit, Offertory and Communion*

These chants consist of an antiphon and a psalm. The antiphon is to be repeated after each verse of the psalm. At least one verse of the psalm has to be sung. The Introit and the Communion psalm are concluded with the Gloria Patri which, with the Sicut erat forms (as in the present Introit of the Roman Missal) one single verse.

It is always allowed to choose psalm 33 as Communion psalm. As antiphon one may then select, except during Septuagesima time and Lent, any fitting Alleluja melody, or in the time throughout the year the antiphon "O taste and see that the Lord is good."

#### 2. *The interlectionary Chants*

Here we find the greatest innovations. The Graduale simplex offers first the "psalmus responsorius." Outside the time from Septuagesima to Easter this psalm is followed by a triple Alleluja which is then repeated by the people. A number of psalm verses are added, of which at least one must be sung. This Alleluja is followed by an Alleluja Psalm. One is free however, to omit the responsorial psalm in its entirety and sing in its stead at least five verses of the Alleluja Psalm.

For the time from Septuagesima to Easter we find in the Graduale simplex two responsorial psalms, an "antiphona acclamationis" which takes the place of the Alleluja, and finally a tract, which takes the place of the Alleluja Psalm.

For Eastertide two Alleluja Psalms have been provided, of one of which at least five verses must be sung. But the triple Alleluja with at least five verses of its psalm may take its place.

Compared with the arrangement of the interlectionary chants in the present Roman Missal, the Graduale simplex offers the following chants:

	Roman Missal	Graduale simplex
Per annum	Graduale Alleluja + V.	Psalmus responsorius Triple Alleluja + some VV. Alleluja Psalm
From Sept. to Easter	Gradual Tract	Psalm. resp. (2 schemata offered) Antiphona acclam. (optional) Tract
Eastertide	Great Alleluja Alleluja	Alleluja Psalm (2 schemata off.) Triple Alleluja + some VV.

a. *The Time throughout the Year**The Graduale and the responsorial Psalm*

Originally, the Graduale was performed as a responsorial psalm: a cantor sung the verses of the psalm and the people responded with a short refrain, usually a text of the same psalm. When the melodies of the Gregorian chant grew richer, the psalm was ever more curtailed until there remained only two verses: the first is called in our present Roman Missal the *responsum*, and the second the *versum*.

The Graduale simplex returns to the ancient practice of the *psalmus responsorius*. It offers for each Mass a psalm, or at least a greater part of a psalm with the proper refrain or response which is a verse or a part of a verse of the same psalm.

*The Alleluja and the Triple Alleluja or Alleluja Psalm*

In former times the Roman Mass contained three lessons. After the first lesson they sung the responsorial psalm. The second lesson was at first also followed by a psalm. Later, however, this psalm was replaced by the Alleluja. Also this Alleluja was performed responsorially. Thus the Gradual in our Roman Missal is usually followed by a short Alleluja, sung to a different tone. It is made up of two Allelujas to which is joined a verse, followed by a third Alleluja.

Now the Graduale simplex presents after the responsorial psalm a triple Alleluja, which, as antiphon, is repeated by the people. A number of psalm verses follow, of which at least one has to be sung; it is again followed by the Alleluja antiphon.

Instead of the Alleluja one may sing, equally an innovation in the Graduale simplex, the Alleluja Psalm: a double Alleluja forms the antiphon which is to be repeated after each verse. One may even skip the responsorial psalm and sing in its stead at least five verses of the new Alleluja Psalm.

b. *The Time from Septuagesima to Lent*

The Roman Missal has here first the Gradual as usual. The Alleluja, however, is replaced by the Tract. The Tract is the rest of the second psalm, formerly sung after the second reading. All the verses are preceded by the letter *V*. (versicle), never by the letter *R*.

(response). This is a clear indication that we are here confronted with a solo, not a responsorial psalm.

The Graduale simplex offers for this time of the year not only one but two responsorial psalms and in addition an "antiphona acclamationis" and finally a Tract. But not all of these chants must be sung, nor even can they be sung in one and the same Mass.

The rubrics state that there are two different ways to chant these pieces a. At least five verses of one of the responsorial psalms are sung. The "antiphona acclamationis" takes the place of the Alleluja. It has to be sung with at least one verse of the second responsorial psalm which has been omitted. But the "antiphona acclamationis" remains facultative. b. Instead of the responsorial psalm one may take the Tract and add, again "ad libitum" the "antiphona acclamationis" with at least one verse of one of the responsorial psalms.

#### c. *Easter tide*

From Low Sunday onwards the so-called "Great Alleluja" replaces the Gradual and the ordinary Alleluja in the Roman Missal. It is arranged in the following way: A double Alleluja is sung as a kind of antiphon. Then comes a versicle which is followed by another Alleluja sung in a different tone, another Alleluja-verse and a last Alleluja.

The Graduale simplex offers for Eastertide two Alleluja Psalms. At least five verses of one of them must be sung. The triple Alleluja with at least five verses of its psalm may take its place.

### IV. The Use of the Graduale simplex

As the title indicates, the Graduale simplex is primarily destined for smaller churches (Graduale simplex in usum minorum ecclesiarum), as was formerly for certain functions of the ecclesiastical year, the "Memoriale Rituum ... in minoribus ecclesiis" of Pope Benedict XIII, published in 1725. These smaller churches may be parishes which have no choirs or good scholas. But the concession is certainly not limited to small parishes. Though Rome expects religious communities and seminaries to continue in their use of the Graduale Romanum, the training of future priests for their pastoral duties will make it necessary to introduce the Graduale simplex also in seminaries and religious houses



of studies. Also sisters' and brothers' congregations should see it as a part of their training to make their novices and young members familiar with this way to sing the Proper of the Mass, in order to enable them to work in small parishes and religious communities. It will frequently be their task to train others in the use of this book and its principles. Who else will have the time, knowledge and energy to make others familiar with the melodies? Who will have the perseverance to practise them until they become firmly rooted in a parish?

### V. Obstacles

The Graduale simplex is destined to be used exclusively as a book of liturgical chant: "Since these texts have been chosen exclusively for musical reasons it is not allowed to use them without musical notes" state the rubrics in the introduction (p. IX). This prescription, together with the fact, that the new liturgical book is in Latin, even in the Vulgate version of the psalms; that it contains Gregorian chant and that it sticks to the ancient form of the responsorial psalms leads us to the question whether the Graduale simplex was already outdated when it appeared. One asks seriously whether it can fulfil, especially in this time of change the task its compilers gave it. Was not eventually the delay of nearly two years (it was ready in autumn 1965) fatal to the future of the book?

#### a. *Latin*

It is true, nobody could have expected that the concession of the mothertongue by the Council would lead so rapidly to an ever more generous extension of its use and that it would be accepted so enthusiastically. Even now, we have to admit, the Church does not intend to abandon the Latin language entirely. But the willing extension of the permission of the Council was a clear indication that the Church did not intend to come to a foul compromise which would have created a hybrid form of worship, because this would have satisfied no one. Consequently, it will be possible in future, and is possible already to celebrate the Mass in all its forms, from low Mass to the Solemn Pontifical Mass entirely in the vernacular. One may eventually deplore that Latin is ever less known, even among priests, but it is a fact and we

cannot turn back the wheel of history. Thus, a Latin Graduale simplex seems to be somewhat anachronistic.

But we must not forget that a Latin Graduale simplex was the only one the Consilium could produce. What other language should have been used? And the Constitution on the Liturgy is still the Magna Charta of the liturgical renewal and it states that "the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites" (art. 36,I).

The very concession of the vernacular, however, seems to have been the solution of the problem. The Graduale simplex can, and according to our opinion should, as soon as possible be translated into the different local languages. There is nothing, neither in the "Praenotanda" nor in the text of the Graduale simplex which forbids its translation. When translated the Graduale simplex will be a great help for the creation of a certain basic stock of texts for the Proprium of sung Masses in the vernacular. A translated Graduale simplex enables the national commissions on sacred Music to take the necessary steps that the strong recommendations of the Instruction on sacred Music of March 5, 1967 (art. 16 and 27) and of the Instruction on the worship of the Eucharistic Mystery of May 25, 1967 (art. 26) for the regular Sunday High Mass of the whole community can be put into effect. A parish should not have only one sung Mass on Sundays, but several. Actually, the work of translation has already started, at least for the English language. The same international committee which gave us the translation of the Canon in English will also take care of the translation of the texts of the Graduale simplex.

#### b. *The Vulgate Version of the Psalms*

A more serious objection against the Graduale simplex is that the texts of the psalms are still those of the Vulgate. Certainly, a lot of misgivings have been voiced in the course of the years against the translation of the Biblical Institute, made on the urging of Pope Pius XII. But this "versio Piana" made the psalms at least understandable. The Council saw the need that something had to be done and urged that a revision of the psalter should be completed "as soon as possible" (art. 91). But the translators have not been successful (as it seems) even after a work of more than three years. Who gives us now the assurance that the verses chosen in the Graduale simplex in the Vulgate version

for the processional and interlectionary chants will still fit in the future Latin version, which will, for obvious reasons, be closer to the "versio Piana" than to the Vulgate? The national committees working on the translation of the Graduale simplex will soon be faced by the problem whether to translate the Vulgate version (and this seems to be anachronistic) or to use or to produce a new and critical translation from the original Hebrew. But will then all verses in the context of the Graduale simplex still make sense? If not, we are faced by the problem whether each national committee has to adapt the new liturgical book to its own use. Is this not a revision of the brand-new Graduale simplex? Could such a situation not have been avoided by either speeding up the new version of the psalms, or by even more delaying the publication of the Graduale simplex? It is our opinion that it may well be that the translators (who must necessarily employ the help of expert exegetes), have to select other verses than those presented by the Graduale simplex, at least on a number of occasions.

### c. *Gregorian Chant*

Once the Graduale simplex has been translated into the mother-tongue is Gregorian melodies can hardly be used any more, the Alleluja antiphons perhaps excepted. Here is a challenge for local composers. "Filled with the Christian spirit they should feel that their vocation is to cultivate sacred music and increase its store of treasures" (Const. on the lit., art. 121). The Graduale simplex invites to compositions in the style of those of Fr. Gelineau's psalms and antiphons. Though one should select one single version for a language, the melodies could and should vary; they should appeal to the different national and cultural tastes. A melody which suits Australians or Americans may not prove attractive in Pakistan or the Philippines.

In some European countries (e.g., Germany, Poland, Hungary) there exists the immemorial custom to sing instead of the Introit, Offertory and Communion popular hymns adapted to the occasion. They sing similar paraphrases of the Gloria, Creed, Sanctus and Agnus Dei during High Mass. Certainly, until 1967, the celebrant had then to say all these texts, as found in the Missal, in a low voice. This was an acknowledged practice. The Instruction on Church Music of Sept. 3, 1958 re-affirmed (though only reluctantly) this privilege (A.A.S. 50

(1958) 635). After the second world war this practice had been widely extended to mission territories when the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith granted this permission when asked for.

The Instruction on sacred Music of March 5, 1967 granted to all those territories the privilege, to omit in sung Masses simply the Introit, Offertory and Communion as found in the Roman Missal and to substitute these chants with suitable hymns in the vernacular. The reaction of other countries to this concession was predictable: why only these dioceses and missions and not all, the whole Church? Within the few months between March and October 1967 so many bishops must have asked for the same concession that the Holy Father presented the Bishops' Synod with the question whether the chant of these three processional songs could be replaced by other appropriate chants, which were to be approved by the respective national episcopal conferences. The answer of the Bishops' Synod was a resounding approval: 126 Fathers gave their unconditional Yes; 19 more agreed with some reservations and only 25 disagreed. This development leads anew to the question whether the Graduale simplex, at least as far as these processional chants are concerned, was already obsolete when it was published on October 3, 1967.

## VI. Advantages

The greatest gain of the Graduale simplex is the enrichment of both texts and melodies it brings to the Roman Mass. A greater variety in the forms of the sung Mass is now within the reach of practically all parishes and communities. There is no need to recite the Proper of the Mass "sub organo" or to sing it in a psalm tone.

Composers of sacred Music have now an excellent chance to adapt the Graduale simplex to their own cultural environment. The prescription that the Graduale simplex may be used only when sung, will certainly speed up the translation of the texts and will inspire composers to create psalmodic tunes and to compose simple and appealing antiphonal melodies which will be in harmony with their own cultural heritage.

Those countries which do not have their own wealth of good religious hymns have here the opportunity to lead the people to active and full participation in the more solemn forms of holy Mass.